

Biathlon Rifles Get High Tech in Training

"RIFLES" FROM PAGE B1

8-16-00

does a coach determine if his athlete is squeezing the trigger steadily or jerking? Pulling too fast or too slow? Is the athlete pulling up when firing or holding steady?

To overcome these training obstacles, Tim Conrad of the USA Olympics Sports Science Department steps in with a system he developed to monitor the biathletes shooting performance.

First, an electronic monitor is strapped to the back of the athlete. The monitor records how fast, how far, and what route the athlete traveled on roller skis. The athlete then positions himself/herself in either the prone or standing shooting position. An infrared laser is routed from the rifle trigger to the target. A video camera that records infrared light is trained on all five targets. Simultaneously, a special trigger is installed which measures the implied force of the pull. The results of all this information is recorded onto a computer monitor. A video of the live performance is then overlaid with the computer data.

"Once all the information is in place, we can tell why what should have been a good shot, isn't," Conrad said.

Conrad, who brings a background in computer programming and electronics to his work with the sports science department, has a particular interest in the biathlon. Conrad said he began competition shooting when he was about 16 years-old. His competition history cumulates with making it to the final selection match for the 1996 USA Olympic

Biathlon team.

Conrad said this technology helps biathletes improve their performance. He said, "The improvement has been phenomenal."

Conrad noted that for the technology to be most effective the athlete has to have the will to work hard and the desire to do better.

"All this technology will only improve performance a couple of percent. But that couple of percent can make the difference in winning," he added. "However, you have to start out with a good athlete."

USA Olympic Biathlon Coach Algis Shalna also talked about the laser technology Conrad developed for the biathlon.

He said what makes a good athlete is "a lot of desire and good genetics."

However, he said the laser and computer monitoring system was helpful in training biathletes, adding that he wished it were available when he was training.

Coach Shalna, a gold medalist in the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo for the USSR, said this type of technology was not available when he was competing in the biathlon. His coaches didn't consider it necessary. When competing, Shalna visualized a training tool like Conrad's system.

"This is a dream," Shalna said, "a dream come true."

Conrad said the technology for this type of monitoring system has been available for about 15 years. He added some countries are using different versions of the same system. However, not too many countries are maximizing it as a training tool.

History of Biathlon Draws Many Competitors

8-16-00

"HISTORY FROM PAGE B1

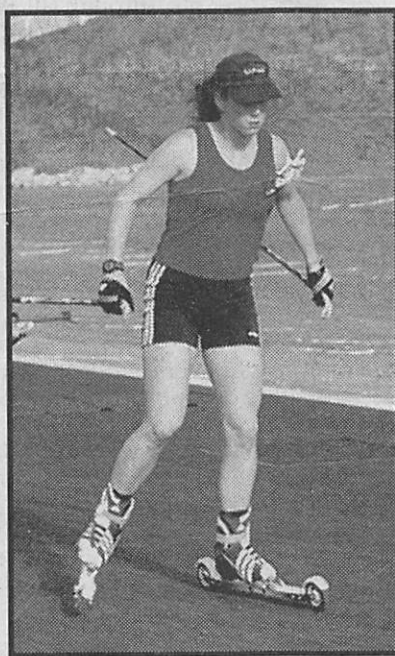
In the late 1930's, the Finnish Army on skis, carrying rifles, and out numbered 10 to one, routed the Russians from their border.

The first true international competition in biathlon came during the Winter Olympics in Chamonix, France in 1924. During these games, the Military Patrol was included as a demonstration event and was continued in the Winter Olympics of 1928, 1936, and 1948.

The Norwegians and the Finns generally dominated this event, with the Italians sneaking in a victory in 1936. After 1948, due to anti-military feeling following World War II, the Military Patrol was dropped from the Olympic program.

In 1948, the Union Internationale de Pentathlon Moderne et Biathlon (UIPMB) formed as the international governing body of biathlon and modern pentathlon and biathlon was accepted as an official Winter Olympic Sport in 1954.

The first World Biathlon Championships were held at Saalfelden, Austria, in 1958 as well, with six nations participating. The UIPMB has had supervision of the sport until recently, with the formation of the International Biathlon Union in 1993 and its recognition by the IOC in 1998. The IBU is now the



Wave photo by Courtney Gressmen
Rachel Steer has competed in the sport of biathlon for over seven years.

international federation for the sport of biathlon. At present, 59 nations are regular members.

Competitions held from 1958-1965 were significantly different than today's events. Competitors used the NATO calibers, first 3.08 and then large bore .223 until the .22 caliber was made the standard in 1978. The ammunition was carried in a belt worn around the athlete's waist. The race was 20 kilometers long, with four different ranges and firing distances of 100-250 meters. In 1966, this arrangement was abandoned in

favor of a single 150-meter range.

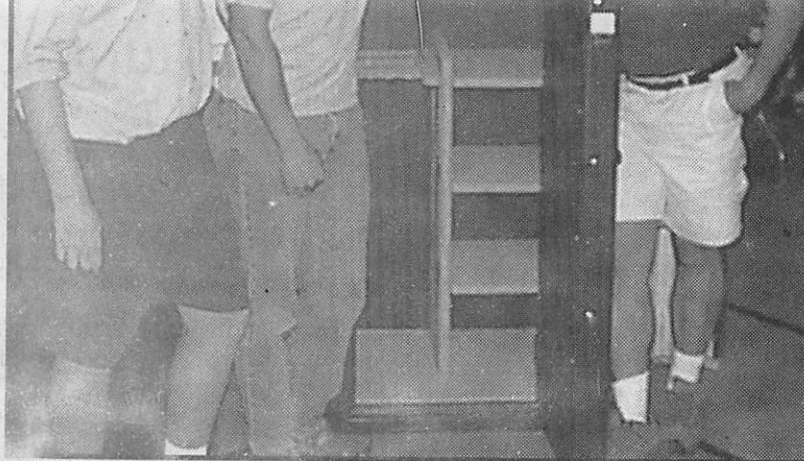
The .22 caliber rifle was adopted as the official rifle caliber in 1978, and it remains the same today. The shooting distance was reduced to a distance of 50-meters and that also remains the same today.

In 1980, mechanical targets almost identical to those used today were first used in a major competition at the Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York.

During this time, women were beginning to make their mark on the biathlon world and the first Women's World Championships were held together for the first time in 1987 in Feistritz, Austria, and they have been held together ever since. Women's Biathlon was included as full medal sport for the first time at the 1992 Winter Games in Albertville, France.

In the United States, the history of biathlon is rich. It was the U.S. that first introduced biathlon into the Winter Olympic Games at Squaw Valley, California, in 1960. Over the last 40 years, the U.S. has played host to many international caliber events -- including two Winter Olympics.

The U.S. Biathlon Association (USBA) coordinates biathlon in the U.S. It is a member-based organization formed in 1980 and now has over 20 nation-wide clubs and four Regional Centers of Excellence.



Grand Prize of the Fort Knox Fireproof Gun Safe went to winner Jaycen Tate. Pictured left to right: SFFW representative Tony Abbott, winner Jaycen Tate and Sportsmen Strategic Alliance President, Don Peay.

"BANQUET" FROM PAGE B3

Conservation Foundation for North America accomplishing specific goals in Utah's dominion.

They include: Maintaining access to 3.7 million acres of School Trust Lands in Utah; \$2.5 Million a year for habitat improvement projects; Passage of Proposition 5; \$100,000 annually for transplanting Wild Turkey, Chukkar and upland game; Funding for the transplants of Bighorn Sheep, Bison, Moose and Mt. Goats; The establishment of a Once in a Lifetime Species Coordinator for the DWR; \$2.5 Million a year in general sales tax funding to the DWR, which will allow Utah to keep the 97,000 deer winter cap which is restoring mountain bucks to public land units; \$2 Million a year in increased funding to completely rebuild Utah's fish hatcheries; The establishment of the Conservation Permit Program that puts over \$400,000 a year into special projects to benefit goats, moose, bison, elk, deer, sheep, and turkey; Predator management policies that will allow for the re-establishment of Utah's deer herds and protection of newly transplanted bighorn sheep and antelope herds; \$300,000 a year for special projects to re-establish depressed deer population in Utah; and Passage of the toughest Trophy Poaching Legislation in the Western U.S.

The Wallsburg banquet committee offered sincere thanks for the generous support and funds generated through the citizens of Wallsburg and outlying areas.

"We want to be able to keep a constant vigil over the future decisions affecting our valuable wildlife heritage," said local Wallsburg committee heads Greg and Anita Allen and Tom and Kim Hicken.

Special guests included Sportsmen For Fish and Wildlife board members.

Master of Ceremonies, Tony Abbott, announced the individual raffle ticket winners and grand prize winners of donations for the event.

"We are on the verge of becoming one of the most influential groups in Utah. This is our only hope of protecting wild places and wild things. We try to be statesman in our efforts for wildlife Conservation with Utah's leading political leaders, who make all the decisions. It's my job to steer this ship through all the mine fields and deliver the results you have asked for. The membership and the Board of Directors of SFW, SCI, UFNWA, Utah and other alliance members set our course. Bottom line, SFW is about keeping superior quality hunting and fishing experiences on Utah's great public lands and waters at prices available to the average Utah Sportsmen. This fall, I guarantee that the "Sportsmen's Voice" (magazine) will be full of fabulous photos from SFW members hunts on public lands," said Peay.

Peay is currently working with Commissioner LaRen Provost to ensure hunters will be able to enjoy hunting in Wasatch County.

You can learn more about the SFW on their Web site at SFWSFH.ORG.

We would like to thank following people for purchasing our lambs: Clark Muhleste, Jerry Davis Construction, G. McPhie Electric, and John Wetzels from Timberline. Your support helps make the show and sale a continued success. Thanks!

Megan and Eli W.

I would like to thank the following businesses and people for their sponsorships with our trip to the National High School Rodeo in Springfield, Illinois. Wasatch County, Ky Cummings Drywall Mountainland Supply, Mt. Lar Metal, Timberline, Wasatch Rodeo Club, The Hub, Premier Building, Jack Webb Trucking, The Cabinet Company, Dai Keen, Spencer Auto Sales, I Homes, Mountainland Or Stop, Kim and Wayne Foy, and Roger Ford, Susan and R Edwards, Nancy and Russ Cummings, Max McDonald, I and Scott Ross, Clyde and R Montgomery, Lisa and K Sessions, Kim and Bart Smi

Daughters of



From left to right: Cheryl Thayer, Mary Bethers (2nd).

Many of the daughters helped with the booth during the Wasatch County Fair and buy tickets during this time.

We wish to thank all of them for their support in our project.

Daughter Inez Horner is the County D.U.P. Thanks to you for your support. Larsen is the captain of Wasatch County. Thank her for all she has done for the county and made and donated the cow and calf.

We invited anyone that is interested in the Larsen a call at 654-3815.

What's Happening

This Week

Blood Drive

There will be a blood drive on August 16th, from 4-8:00 p.m. at the Heber Stake (150 North 200 West). Contact Neal Price at 654-1395 for more information.

Shadow Mountain Showcase 2000

On Tuesday, August 22nd, at Kingsbury Hall in Salt Lake City, there will be a Shadow Mountain Showcase 2000 concert starring: Kurt Bestor, Michael McLean, and Lex De Azevedo. It will also be featuring violinist Jenny Oaks Baker, singer-songwriter Hilary Weeks and more. Tickets are available at the Kingsbury Hall box office and at all Art Tixx outlets (801-355-ARTS). For more information please call 801-517-2155.

Coming

Palisade P

Come one, come all, to the Fraternal Order of Eagles. We are sponsoring a carnival for the Palisade area. Lots of fun. You need not be a member to have some fun on August 26th, from 1:00-6:00 p.m.

Westbound

The Summit Institute in Park City is planning a four day event over the Labor Day weekend. The event will feature literature, and humanities of the West. The Valley Resort's Snow Park Lodge and Snow Park will be open from 6:30-10:00 p.m. Sept. 2-3, 12-10:00 p.m. Sept. 4-5.